THE SMITHSONIAN METEOROLOGICAL TABLES.

Mr. Charles S. Wood, Research Observer at Mount Weather, Va., under date of July 14, 1908, writes as follows:

I have the honor to call attention to the following inaccuracies that occur in the Smithsonian Meteorological Tables, second and third revised editions:

Page.	Value for—	Printed—	Should be—
185	27.65	702.21	702.31
110	467	3791	3891
110	468	3774	3874
110	469	3757	3857

These occur in the tables that we use in computing our kite records, and I take this opportunity to call attention to them in order that they may be corrected in future editions.

NATIONAL CONSERVATION COMMISSION.

Eminent statesmen, engineers, foresters, and geologists to the number of 50 constitute this commission, which is organized in four sections relative to waters, forests, lands, and minerals, respectively. The spirit that is to animate the commission is well exprest in the following extract from President Roosevelt's letter of instructions:

The work of the Commission should be conditioned upon keeping ever in mind the great fact that the life of the nation depends absolutely on the material resources, which have already made the nation great. Our object is to conserve the foundations of our prosperity. We intend to use these resources; but to so use them as to conserve them. No effort should be made to limit the wise and proper development and application of these resources; every effort should be made to prevent destruction, to reduce waste, and to distribute the enjoyment of our national wealth in such a way as to promote the greatest good of the greatest number for the longest time.

The Commission must keep in mind the further fact that all the natural resources are so related that their use may be, and should be, coordinated. Thus, the development of water transportation, which requires less iron and less coal than rail transportation, will reduce the draft on mineral resources; the judicious development of forests will not only supply fuel and structural material, but increase the navigability of streams, and so promote water transportation; and the control of streams will reduce soil erosion and permit American farms to increase in fertility and productiveness, and so continue to feed the country and maintain a healthy and beneficial foreign commerce. The proper coordination of the use of our resources is a prime requisite for continued national prosperity.

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There is no break between the interests of State and nation, these interests are essentially one. Hearty cooperation between the State and national agencies is essential to the permanent welfare of the people.

Of course there are many other national resources, material, physical, intellectual, and psychical, that have contributed to make this nation great and which must also be developed and conserved.

We can not proceed wisely and successfully to the conservation of the water supply without solving preliminary problems, some of which are meteorological, such as the evaporation of snow and water under the influence of sunshine and wind. In the conservation of forests and in reforestation we need more minute knowledge than we now have of the influence of snowfall, rainfall, sunshine, and temperature.

The atmosphere in its purity is a prime factor in the matter of health and disease; the conservation of the national health and bodily vigor is a matter of first importance. But the conservation of the intellectual vigor and high moral tone of the people is, far and away above all other considerations, that which will contribute to maintain it in its high position during future ages.

Montesquieu long ago defended the thesis that climatic influences are directly or indirectly responsible for the laws of nations. Dexter and Ward have shown that the struggle of man against adverse features of climate has had great influence on his education, ethics, and morals. The first principles of evolution show to what great extent the weather and the climate have affected the physical development and material progress of nations. Ibsen presents to us "Brand" in the act of choosing between the superstition, deception, supineness, and baseness of the lowlanders and the aspiration, nobility, and energy of the mountaineers; as tho the clear sunshine, cool air, and dry winds of the upper atmosphere lifted man to a higher plane of living.

Are we not all conscious of the truth of the fact that if possible we would annually flee to the upper air of the mountains or the purer air of the ocean in order to obtain physical and mental strength for the life that most of us must lead in the lowlands?

When we feel the inspiration of the fresh life that we breathe in with our pure, cold, clear, dry northerly winds, are we not taking in great drafts of our most precious national resource, i. e., the descending mass of air that pours down upon us from the upper regions of the atmosphere. It flows from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico, from the Rocky Mountains to the Atlantic coast. It lifts up the lower moist air and gives us rain. It freezes the swamps and kills fevers and malarias. Some say there is ozone in it, but that is only another word for health and vigor. As it is sure to bring cool weather in summer, but very cold in winter, we have learned to count upon its beneficent influence in numerous ways with certainty.

No other region of the world has yet been discovered where this pure upper air comes down to man so freely and opportunely. It descends almost as soon as we begin to feel the need of it and ceases when we have had just enough. Summer or winter it is equally welcome and useful. It blesses the land east of the Rockies, and, if we could, we would so conserve it that those living west of the mountains could enjoy it blessings. But the Pacific coast has its own special climate, and nothing that man can do will alter that, while the whole nation is richer for having at its disposal two extensive climatic regions, separated by an equally extensive plateau region. The conservation of national vigor will eventually require a continual interchange between the inhabitants of these three regions. It is oftentimes as important for the highlanders to return to the lowlands as it is for the rest of us to flee to the mountains. Experience has shown that Europeans who have spent several years in the Tropics must occasionally return to the northern climate for a breath of fresh air. India has its mountain resorts in the Himalayas; the government officials at Calcutta must spend half the year at Simla.

The summer climate of Washington is as bad as that of Calcutta. Will not the conservation of the energies of our Government officials eventually necessitate an annual hegira to the dome of our continent in Colorado?

WHERE AND HOW CAN OUR OBSERVERS PURSUE THE STUDY OF MODERN SCIENCE?

When it lately came to the knowledge of the Editor that an assistant observer had found a way to prosecute a course in laboratory physics and attain an advanced collegiate standing it occurred to him that many others would, by such an example, be encouraged to undertake similar studies. He has, therefore, secured permission to publish the following sketch of activity during the years 1903–08. The reader must, therefore accept this sketch not as being from Mr. Hooper, but from the Editor himself as showing that, to those who have the will, the way will be opened.

There are very many Weather Bureau stations located near good schools of science and polytechnics. The Weather Bureau Form No. 4047—Mis., seems to allow every observer an opportunity to state his desire to remain at his present station until he can finish the local collegiate course in modern languages, mathematics, physics, etc. It will not, in general, be possible to give him a new assignment to a station that has special advantages for study; but one can at least make the most of the advantages that he has, and hope for better in the future.